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ABSTRACT

Based upon a review of handbooks and manuals from 212 two-year colleges in 39 states, this paper examines directions currently evident in the purpose, content, style and format of these publications and offers recommendations for their improvement. After looking at the characteristics of junior/community college faculty handbooks in the 1960s, the paper discusses the effects of collective bargaining on the current use of handbooks as in-house communication organs and notes that they are frequently being replaced by policy manuals covering areas not yet encompassed by collective bargaining agreements. The paper's next sections offer suggestions for employing and improving college handbooks, citing exemplary practices from the handbooks reviewed. These suggestions include: (1) clarify relationships between handbooks and collective bargaining contracts or other regulatory sources to avoid confusion and legal complications; (2) offer expanded information on curriculum development, instructional improvement, institutional purpose, and staff development opportunities as part of the handbooks or as separate documents; (3) develop specialized handbooks for particular groups, such as counselors, instructional and service specialists, and administrators; (4) provide information on policies and regulations related to the often neglected topics of institutional research and articulation and transfer; and (5) maintain an informal and straightforward style. (DAB)

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TWO-YEAR COLLEGE HANDBOOKS AND MANUALS

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

by

Frederick C. Kintzer

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ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges

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Foreword

What is the faculty handbook in an era of negotiated contracts? Does it still have a part to play? In this well-reasoned analysis of past and present handbooks Professor Kintzer answers the question of their usefulness. The handbook, he asserts, is not a legal document, not a substitute for the contract between faculty and district. Yet it is more than an information bulletin. And it is still deserving of attention and thoughtful preparation if only because it reduces the number of occasions when a staff member can say rightfully, "I didn't know what they expected."

Professor Kintzer's analysis should be required reading for community college staff members who are charged with, or even considering putting together important materials that can smooth waters often troubled by a failure to communicate.

Arthur M. Cohen, Director
ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges

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TWO-YEAR COLLEGE HANDBOOKS AND MANUALS: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Frederick C. Kintzer

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1983

The decade of the 1950s is remembered for adaption and expansion of organizations and institutions serving the American society. Lessons learned from World War II introduced the importance of sustained systematic communication in industry as well as colleges and universities. The necessity for information exchange, particularly vertical exchange of policies and implementing procedures, was first recognized and applied in industrial settings. These developments gave impetus to articles and chapters in books on personnel and business communication concerning the refinements of internal written communication. The topic began to appear in management development programs sponsored by industry and courses in colleges and universities. Practice in writing bulletins, handbooks, manuals, and other documents for employees became a part of management training.

Values of a well-organized communication system were soon recognized by school administrators. Special attention was given to the creation and use of policy manuals following the 1952 convention of the National School Boards Association, when a survey conducted at the St. Louis meeting revealed that only 35 percent of the districts represented had produced written policies. As a feature of the conference, 20 groups participated in discussions on strategies for developing and communicating institutional policies.[1] During the last four years of that decade, at least 9 articles were published in the American School Board Journal, alone. Others appeared in Nation's Schools, School Life, the Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Junior College Journal.

Similar interests were generating at that time in public junior colleges. Two documents produced by the author in the early 1960s and a follow up in 1966 added to the literature on junior college faculty handbooks and board policy manuals, presumably helping to increase interest in utilizing these communication sources.[2]

In that day, junior college faculty handbooks were primarily information bulletins. Prepared in less formal language than policy manuals, the handbooks contained

rules, regulations, and procedures on a diversity of topics meant for a specific clientele at the college, most frequently for the full-time faculty. Usually more comprehensive than manuals, the material was presented in ready reference style with organizational charts, personnel listings, salary schedules, calendars, and a veritable encyclopedia of facts. They further differed from policy manuals in advice-giving on matters not covered by formal policy, and techniques such as photographs, illustrations, and occasionally questions and answers tc identify an instructor or staff member more closely with the institution. Student information was minimal since most colleges published a separate handbook for students.

Maximum attention was given to three areas: general regulations, procedural information, and professional matters pertaining to the clientele. The larger handbooks had tables of contents and indexes, and items were often coded with policies taken from state law or code, or the minutes of the board of trustees.

The growth in size and complexity of these publications was a direct reflection of growth and diversification of two-year colleges. New material began to appear in the middle 1960s on issues of the day: academic freedom, professional rank, tuition, the international

student, and the development of faculty senates, state systems, and most traumatic, collective bargaining. In addition to regular faculty, handbooks were designed for part-time (extended day-evening) faculty, counselors and other student development specialists, new faculty and employee groups, non-certificated or classified personnel, and administrators.

Standardization and item stereotyping began, unfortunately, to characterize faculty handbooks. Legal terminology appeared more frequently in place of more readable texts. Some institutions, at least temporarily, replaced handbooks with a single publication called the board policy manual - another sign of increasing standardization and lessening individuality.

Summarizing an earlier period, the faculty handbook differed from, but yet supported the board policy manual by offering rules and regulations implementing policies and dealing primarily with responsibilities and privileges of the teaching staff; providing advice and suggestions in a more informal and personal style on a variety of matters not necessarily governed by policy; answering frequently asked questions; and making use of graphs, charts, and photographs to introduce the institution to new teachers and to remind the more experienced faculty

of services and routines. The faculty handbook of past decades did not concentrate on educational/instructional matters. It dealt almost entirely with institutional purposes, rules, and regulations - administration instead of teaching and instruction. As a comprehensive informational and procedural source book, it was more factual and descriptive than creative.

Virtually all two-year colleges continue to publish some type of "in house" information organ. A few produce specialized documents for employee groups and students, e.g., full-time and/or part-time faculty; new, adjunct, and visiting faculty; department chairs; manager/administrators; supervisory personnel; and non-teaching employees. While overlapping, these include rules and information pertinent to the particular clientele.

In certain states, notably California, the recent surge of collective bargaining contractual agreements appears to be undermining the value and in some districts is threatening the continuance of the traditional handbook. However, these source books are still widely produced by two-year colleges throughout the United States. Although more district/ college policy manuals are still in use than handbooks, contracts have tended

to lessen the reliance on the publication of policy manuals. Board policies are now being absorbed in the contracts. The advent of collective bargaining appears actually to have reduced the number of policies adopted by boards of trustees.

Legal precedence is a prime reason for the replacement. While existing handbooks carry disclaimer statements, confusion on the authenticity of policies and procedures stated in handbooks, and clauses in the contract frequently occurs. For that reason alone many California districts have given up publication of handbooks for both certificated and classified personnel. Other districts in that state have abandoned or are considering eliminating these documents in favor of manuals containing policies and procedures not yet encompassed by collective bargaining. With the onset of contracts, college groups are often referred to as "covered" under negotiated agreements, inferring that handbook material is inconsequential since it is not binding, and at best is only tentative.

Complications are readily recognized in multi-unit districts where before collective bargaining, the individual colleges exercised flexibility in interpreting board policy. College faculty handbooks within the district

varied considerably on important procedures, e.g., faculty hiring and assignment, budget allocation, scheduling, and faculty evaluation. Now in California, these are negotiable districtwide under state statute. Apprehension is expressed particularly by management that if the colleges continue to differ procedurally as verified in handbooks and manuals, district faculties, and other employees under contract might press for these more liberal interpretations. Board policy challenges, expecially when brought through grievance procedures to the P.E.R.B. board, could be unnecessarily complex, difficult, and costly. Some administrators are saying, the best way to blunt the power of handbooks and manuals is to eliminate them.

A new era of handbook and manual preparation appears to be emerging. What directions in purpose, content, style and format can be verified? How can these documents be improved to continue as viable instruments? A review of two-year college handbooks and manuals was recently undertaken to attempt to answer these questions by identifying apparent changes and determining general directions. While every document was carefully studied, frequency counts of topics and other content analysis techniques were not employed.

Suggestions contained in the paper are based, in part, on a thorough perusal of the contents of the document sample, on accepted practice identified in the literature and on internal organizational communication and common practice in other enterprises.

In total, 313 documents from 212 institutions in 39 states were examined. Several types of two-year colleges were represented: 164 community colleges, 14 technical institutes, 14 branches of senior colleges or universities, and 18 junior colleges including 8 independent and 10 church-related institutions. In addition, statewide policy books were received from 3 state organizations. Examples taken from the sampling are used to illustrate and amplify the findings and suggestions. Specific titles and dates of documents are included for the convenience of readers who may want to communicate with the institution.

ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACTS AND OTHER REGULATORY SOURCES

The first suggestion is pertinent to two-year colleges in states where all or many institutions have unionized or contemplate initiating collective negotiation procedures.

If handbooks and manuals produced by institutions under collective bargaining are to maintain credibility, connections with the contract or contracts should be clarified. Practically all of the documents open with a statement of purpose to justify operational policies and administrative procedures, duties, responsibilities, privileges, assignments, et al, but few in unionized districts carry references to the agreements.

This can be accomplished in a simple statement of purpose or by an acknowledgment in the introductory statement. The Union College (New Jersey) Faculty Handbook 1980-81 is an example. The introduction contains this sentence: "Any policy or procedures in this handbook inconsistent with the provisions of the contract agreement shall be null and void." The Chabot College Faulty Handbook (1981-82) (South County Community College, California) also illustrates the point. The following acknowledgement appears on the cover:

> This faculty handbook should be read together with the collective bargaining agreement between the district and the Chabot College Teachers Association CTA/NEA (exclusive bargaining agent). The material in the faculty handbook is applicable to all bargaining unit members if not in conflict with the collective bargaining agreement in effect.

The foreword to the Rancho Santiago District (California) Continuing Education Division Faculty Handbook (1981-82) contains a stronger statement:

> The terms and conditions contained herein are subordinate to, and subject to the terms and conditions of, any collective bargaining contract reached between the district and the exclusive representative of the certified staff. All information contained herein is subject to amendment, alteration, deletion, and change during the course of the fiscal year 1981-82 subject to application of state law.

Similarly, the introduction to the University of Maine (community college branch) Classified Employee Handbook (1978) clearly states that the publication is for general information and not a statement of contractual obligation. The University Board of Trustees reserves the right to change or discontinue without notice any plan or program. The Part-time Faculty Handbook of the University College of the University of Cincinnati (1981-82) refers to the legal precedence of the UC/AAUP collective bargaining contract.

Other documents have disclaimer clauses with reference to board prerogative. The Faculty Manual of Clayton Junior College (1978) (University of Georgia System) is prepared for the convenience of the faculty, but is not to be construed as an official publication of the Board of Regents. The faculty is further advised that Regental by-laws and policies will prevail if conflicting material is found in the manual. The unofficial

status of handbooks is also declared in two other university college publications: those published by the University of Kentucky Community College System and Eastern New Mexico University for its two-year college branches.

The Delhi College (New York) Handbook (1981) has the most inclusive statement on this matter. The handbook is introduced as an informational reference to policies, procedures, facilities, services and other items of interest, but is not a legal or technical statement or contract, or a complete statement of rights and responsibilities of the staff. Other superceding documents are mentioned on pages v-vi. Appropriate sections of both the Administrative Handbook (1981-82) and the Faculty Handbook (1981-82) of Olympic College (Washington) are coded to the contract as well as statutory and board authority. The formal publication contains the faculty master contract.

Still another illustration of the point on establishing relationships is found in the introduction to the Wenatchee Valley College (Washington) Policy and Procedure Manual (March 1979). The following statement accounts for other statuatory, policy, and regulatory sources that probably would take precedence:

The brief summaries of statutory, policy, and regulatory sources cited in the procedures section are not intended to be legally interpretive nor are they intended to be comprehensive; rather, they are designed to provide a quick overview of the essence of the authority source.

State boards and commissions of education however constituted continue to exert ever-stronger controls over two-year colleges. This external power encroachment should also be referenced under the appropriate policy. The 1979 Faculty Handbook of John C. Calhoun State Community College (Alabama) provides such citations. One of the purposes of the publication is, in fact, to identify such policies that impinge on the administration of the institution.

The Policy Manual (1975) of Daytona Beach Community College (Florida) is one of the most complete compilations in the collection. Each college policy is preceded by the legal authority, i.e., Florida Statutes, Board of Education, or district board. This compendium further illustrates major differences between handbooks and manuals, the latter being formal and legalistic with material coded to superior authority.

The 1978 Amarillo College (Texas) Faculty Handbook table of contents includes references to other college publications, thus tying together a series of documents

as supplements to the handbook. Establishing relationships among institutional publications is indeed a valuable contribution to the college communication system.

Descriptions of institutional governance organizations and their work, e.g., faculty senate constitutions, assembly by-laws, are more frequently provided. Handbooks from Broward County and Miami-Dade (South Campus, Florida), Otero Junior College (Colorado), and Butler County Community College (Pennsylvania) all carry these references. Some documents in the collection combine differentiating styles of the handbook and policy manual. For example, the first two sections of the Marymount Palos Verdes College (California) Handbook for Administration and Faculty (1982) contain the by-laws of the Board of Trustees and the college administration. This policy material is followed by procedural information in areas of "practical functioning" that is written in less formal language.

Maintaining accuracy of material while assuring a reasonable readability level is a difficult problem particularly in policy manual writing. A brief explanatory note following the most complex section is one technique to consider.

EXPAND EDUCATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Handbooks and manuals for two-year college faculty seldom emphasize curriculum development and the instructional process. With few exceptions, current documents deal almost exclusively with administrative rules and regulations and duties, responsibilities and privileges of the employee group addressed. Information exchange on instructional improvement and other aspects of faculty development are normally missing. A most important linkage is thereby lost. Some institutions include such material as appendices, but these are apt to remain unnoticed in the myriad of regulatory items. Material as important as institutional purpose, curriculum development, instructional improvement, opportunities for staff development, and other dimensions central to maintaining quality programs and services should be prominently, not secondarily, located in handbooks and manuals.

Two alternatives are obvious; to place development material in the body of documents, or to prepare a separate publication focusing on learning and instruction.

The first alternative is more frequently followed in publications for part-time or adjunct faculty who may generally be underprepared in curriculum development and pedagogy. For example, the Spoon River College (Illinois) Part-time Faculty Handbook (1978-79) is primarily devoted to facilitating successful teaching. Manuals for the same groups in two Arizona colleges, Yavapai and Western Arizona, have sections on working with adults. The North Country Community College (New York) Adjunct Faculty Manual (1981-82) has a section on "Techniques for Teachers of Adults." The Merced College (California) Part-time Faculty Handbook (undated) contains material on "The Learning Process" and "Methods and Techniques of Teaching," and the Glendale College (Arizona) Visiting Faculty Handbook (1981-82) has sections on objective building, lesson planning, and motivation. The Marshalltown Community College (Iowa) Faculty Handbook (1981) is used as the vehicle to exchange instructional materials with the faculty. Issues of Innovation Abstracts from the National Institute for Staff and

Organizational Development, North American Consortium are added regularly to the loose leaf document.

An unusual example of separate publications for faculty development was produced by the Community College of Vermont. The entire Staff Manual (1979) is devoted to the college's unique community and competency-based approach to education. While not a definitive "how to do it" document, it is totally committed to relating functions, e.g., determining objectives and outcomes, in developing curriculum and teaching to resources of the college. A final section on staff development lists specific skills to be perfected and how the college can help in improvement and assessment. An annotated bibliography on adult development and learning, competence-based and experiential learning, student support, curriculum and instructional development, concludes this remarkable document. Rules and regulations are given in a separate manual.

The Handbook for Educational Planning (1978) of the Community College of Philadelphia is also exceptional. Steps involved in effective course planning are discussed. Minimal, intermediate, and fully-developed levels of

course development are described, and procedures follow for developing and improving new career and general education courses. Copies or abstracts may be obtained from ERIC under the ED number 206 354.

DEVELOP SPECIALIZED DOCUMENTS

The sample included a number of specialized handbooks and manuals addressed to particular groups, e.g., various kinds of administrators and managers, counselors, instructional and service specialists, and students. Examples will be given and briefly described.

Administrators/Managers

Several of the California documents are prepared expressly for the management team. Products of collective bargaining and the massive accumulation of State Education Code citations, these are basic guides to policies and procedures for managers as distinct from collective negotiation "sponsoring" groups. Differences in policies and responsibilities of certificated and classified managers have, in part, resulted from unionization. These variations cause differences in relationships between managers and employee groups. Precise definitions of certificated and classified managers should therefore be

cited initially ahead of sections on rights, responsibilities, entitlements, and conditions of employment. Statements on ethics, administrative decision making, and due process should also be prominently located.

Differences in working conditions, compensation, and compensatory time in managerial positions are additional justifications for separate handbooks for administrators and managers. These and other considerations are mentioned in the Cazenovia College (New York) Executive and Administrator Handbook (1977).

The Handbook for Chairpersons (1980) published by Los Angeles City College is the only one of its kind in the collection. The initial statement prepared by the President of Los Angeles Pierce College on "What is a Department Chair?" is a valuable review of role and responsibility.

Another type of management specialist manual in the sampling is worth noting. The Information and Guidelines Manual for Grants and Projects Development (1977) from Harford Community College (Maryland) was written for employees assigned to monitor educational, administrative, training, and research activities sponsored by external public agencies, foundations, corporations, and other institutions. The manual describes items that should be included in a project proposal, e.g., college procedures

for approval and submission, services and assistance available from the college, administrative procedures for sponsored projects and programs, and general information pertaining to compensation, direct and indirect costs, cost-sharing and other subjects relevant to externally funded activities. This material taken from the abstract prepared by the Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges staff may be obtained, along with the full document, under the ERIC number 146 959.

Handbooks for Counselors

Handbooks and manuals for guidance personnel tend to be specialized; for counselors of the handicapped, adult students, and other constituents. Manuals of a highly technical nature are prepared for admissions and records personnel, and others associated with the "book-keeping" function.

Considerable attention is currently being given to working with the handicapped and documents for counselor/advisors have appeared. One of the most comprehensive of these was released in 1978 by the State University of New York Coordinating Area No. 4. The publication, entitled Guidance Services for the Physically Disabled Two-Year College Student: A Counselor's Manual, outlines the role of the counseling office in

recruiting handicapped students and preparing for them. Special admissions and registration services are detailed. In succeeding sections, contributions of the faculty toward successful orientation are outlined, and the roles of the financial aid division and health and placement offices are identified. Other sections deal with physical education, recreation, representation in student government. Extensive resource lists and bibliographies are also included. This valuable document is also available from ERIC under the ED number 161 490.

References have been made to extensive sections on adult students, particularly in part-time or adjunct faculty handbooks. Scant attention is given to a burgeoning group, the international student. Many two-year colleges, particularly community colleges, enroll hundreds of visa and alien students. Several: Miami-Dade (Florida), Montgomery (Maryland), Central YMCA (Illinois), San Jacinto (Texas), Compton (California), Northern Virginia, and Pima (Arizona) have more than 500 international enrollees.[3] All have counseling specialists who deal primarily or exclusively with foreign students, but virtually none have handbooks for this group. Wastage of efforts, confusion, and neglect of opportunities are almost certain to result.

Orientation booklets are available to students, but fewer for counselors.

Handbooks for Instructional and Service Specialists

Instructional specialists associated with continuing education are better represented in the sampling of handbooks and manuals than counselors. For example, Coastline Community College (California) publishes handbooks for Coordinated Instructional Systems Course Learning Managers (1978) and Emeritus Faculty (1980). The former offers logistical material pertinent to C.I.S. course processing, including an explanation of the Testing Prescriptive Feedback System (TPF), the service associated with examination preparation and student feedback. The latter contains a rather extensive bibliography of gerontology together with sections on teaching techniques. Northern Pioneer Community College (Arizona) circulates a Program Coordinators Handbook (1981-82). Program coordinators called team leaders in decision making are assistants to divisional heads and appear to have broader responsibilities than the conventional department deans.

Open campuses or campuses without walls are increasing in number. As special segments of traditional institutions, these units usually have only part-time

instructors who live and work in the community. Administrative staffs are ordinarily minimal, and students services curtailed. Handbooks for the instructional staff of "open colleges" are obviously different. The Faculty Handbook (undated) for the Open Campus of Valencia Community College (Florida) is an admirable example. Particularized sections include faculty and student performance criteria which in continuing education differ considerably from those for regular faculty and the academic student body, and a variety of forms for the open campus faculty.

Institutions with non-traditional instructional components should well consider developing handbooks for specialists assigned to that environment.

Manuals for service personnel are also advisable. Services required to support the proliferation of programs for new publics have greatly expanded employee groups in community colleges. While much common information is exchanged in bulletins, e.g., material related to fringe benefits, grievance procedures, and other standard clauses of contractual agreements, each support organization would necessarily have its own set of working rules and regulations. These documents additionally provide opportunities for the support staff to relate more closely

to the parent organization, and at the same time, to have their own organization.

Maricopa Community College District (Arizona) publishes a series of policy manuals for support specialists: employees in maintenance and operations, food services, and crafts. A staff development committee supports each group. Membership includes district and college administrators. The goal of the committee is to upgrade general knowledge and job performance. Financial assistance is available for job related seminars as well as academic upper division courses.

The Maintenance Staff Handbook (1978) of Lees-McRae College (North Carolina) is one of several for service personnel.

INCLUDE MATERIAL ON NEGLECTED TOPICS

Two topics given scant recognition in handbooks and manuals deserve greater attention: institutional research, and articulation and transfer.

Institutional Research

While institutional research is occasionally mentioned as a legitimate function of two-year colleges, the values of a system for evaluating and improving programs, instruction, and managerial efficiency are not often given space. The Sheldon Jackson College (Alaska) Staff

Handbook (1980-81) is one of the few to stress the importance of a well-organized research program. In introducing the college research policy, the president insists that while the primary function of the college is the promotion of learning, research should be supported that contributes to learning and enhances the learning atmosphere. The relationship of recent research on the cultural aspects of instruction to better understanding of students at the college is listed as an example of a type of investigation to be encouraged. Faculty are also encouraged to develop elementary research projects in two-year degree programs. Aquaculture (spawning and rearing of salmon, the important industry of the region) is illustrative of an ongoing program with research requirements. In the president's words: "All of the above types of research would seem reasonable in light of the purpose and goals of the institution, but decisions regarding the extent of the time, money, and energy would need to be determined against the primary goal of the institution which is instruction."[4]

Articulation/Transfer

Articulation (services for transfer-bound students) and transfer (exchange of credits, courses, and curricula) are virtually unmentioned in faculty handbooks

and manuals. In fact, only two of the 313 documents collected for this review contain a discussion of the topic. Both are products of Clark County Community College (Nevada). The regular Faculty Handbook and the part-time Faculty Handbook (both 1980-81) carry identical excerpts from the University Board of Regents policy governing transfer between the four university community colleges and the two universities. One other source; the Iowa Lakes Community College Procedure Manual (undated) has information on transfer, specifically, a form for recording approved transfer credit on a student's permanent record.

A similar paucity of material on these vital responsibilities was noted in earlier studies by the author. Community college leaders are reminded of the critical importance of strong academic and vocational transfer programs, and again, twenty years later, are admonished to add this topic to documents designed for faculty, counselors, and students. These omissions are possibly symptomatic of a general neglect of transfer education that community colleges can ill afford.

What information on transfer is appropriate for faculty and staff handbooks and manuals? In addition to policies governing transfer, actual agreements with

heavily used senior institutions are certainly justified, including equivalency course lists and applications or uses of such courses at the senior college. Discussion of articulation services for transfers is vital information for prospective baccalaureate degree-bound students, e.g., orientation seminars, special counseling and financial aid. Granted that such material is more likely to be found in catalogs, the entire area of articulation/transfer is badly neglected in documents published by both two- and four-year institutions.

MAINTAIN AN INFORMAL STYLE AND PRESENT STRAIGHTFORWARD EXPLANATIONS

Handbooks and manuals for the general faculty or support staff should be written in a less formal, less rigid style than those prepared for specialized segments. Whenever possible, policies should be paraphrased or simplified with clear and straightforward explanations for a general population. Questions to ask include: What instructions need to be provided? How can the information be clearly and accurately presented? How can the material be made more interesting and personal for sake of acceptance? and What is the most attractive and usable format?

These vignettes illustrate informality, simplification, clarity of presentation, and selectivity of material. The 1980 faculty handbooks from Whatcom (Washington), Northern Nevada, and Daytona Beach (Florida) are recognized for informal writing and personal style, e.g., use of personal pronouns. The St. Louis Community College - Meramec Faculty Manual (1981-82) offers briefs of policies and procedures, and the Broward Community College (Florida) Faculty Handbook (1979-80) is introduced as a quick, unofficial reference to policies and general operating guidelines. Abstracts of regulations along with full policy statements are included in the Policy Handbook (undated) of Itawamba Junior College (Mississippi).

Only controlling and precedence-taking policies and documents are placed in the Austin Community College (Texas) Faculty Handbook (1981-82). The Wenatchee Valley Community College Policy and Procedure Manual (1979) contains brief summaries of statutory, policy and regulatory sources. It is not intended to be legally interpretive or comprehensive, rather a quick overview of the authority source for employee groups. The Columbus Technical Institute (Ohio) Faculty Handbook (1981) is referred to as a practical guide, and restricts

the number of policies referenced. The introduction to the Santa Barbara City College (California) Faculty Manual (undated) indicates that only items are carried that directly concern the faculty and these are presented in a complete but concise format. New items are first approved by the Academic Senate.

Organization and presentation of material are also important considerations for improving readability. For example, the Faculty Handbook (1980) of Paducah Community College (University of Kentucky System) lists on the inside cover the 13 most asked questions by new faculty, and the brief sections that follow are organized around these questions.

Other Format Matters

Color coding is a simple but effective technique for identifying particular document sections. Of the various publications described in this paper, policy manuals are invariably the largest, most comprehensive, and most difficult to interpret. The best examples in the collection of color coding, indexing, and other format features are: Policies and Procedures Manual (third revision 1981), Oscar Rose Junior College (Oklahoma); Faculty Handbook (1980), Black Hawk College (Illinois); Delhi College Handbook (1981) State University Agricultural and

Technical College (New York); Faculty Handbook (1980) Lees-McRae College (North Carolina); Policy and Procedure Manual (1979), Wenatchee Valley College (Washington); and Faculty Handbook (undated), Porterville College (California).

Techniques for maintaining updated documents include loose leaf binders, pockets for holding recently received sheets, and elevated tabs for quick identification. Examples are too numerous to mention. Two, however, are outstanding in these respects: the San Diego City College Handbook (1981-82) and the Pasadena City College (California) Faculty Handbook (1981-82). Both are loose leaf binders and have tabs for identifying sections.

Dimensions of the publications are also important considerations. For instance, pocket size handbooks have been recommended for business and industry.[5] While a small size document is sometimes used for institutional collective bargaining agreements (at least a half dozen have been noted in California) no pocket size handbooks or manuals are in the collection.

Photographs typifying college catalogs and recruitment publications are useful in certain documents, e.g.,

orientation manuals for new employees and student handbooks. The two-year campus Faculty Manual (1979) of the University of South Carolina is particularly effective in that respect.

Simplicity, brevity, and a lighter touch are valid qualities of handbook and manual writing. Choice of topics with particular meaning to the audience, and indexing, coding, graphic displays, and pictorials are also important editorial considerations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations emerging from this investigation of two-year college handbooks and manuals are summarized as follows:

1. ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACTS AND OTHER REGULATORY SOURCES. In states where unionization is widespread, it is essential to clarify the relationships between handbooks and manuals and the appropriate contracts or contracts. This is particularly crucial in institutions and districts developing comprehensive contracts to avoid general confusion and legal complications that are causing the abandonment of handbooks and manuals in California.

2. EXPAND EDUCATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS. Evidence cited in the second section of the study points toward a purpose for handbooks that is seldom acknowledged: to offer material on learning and instruction. Enrichment of the traditional information-centered handbook, or publication of a separate document are two possibilities. The latter is appropriate strategy where bargaining agreements may have superceded or invalidated policy originated by the board of trustees.

3. DEVELOP SPECIALIZED DOCUMENTS. Handbooks prepared for special groups is one of the striking changes noted in the twenty year period since the author's first investigations of these publications. Diversification of two-year colleges programs and services has necessitated this expansion, particularly in comprehensive community colleges. Documents specifically written for counselors, instructional and service specialists, and administrative/managerial groups, e.g., department chairs, supplement the original concentration on full- and part-time faculty, non-certificated employees, and students. Improved inner-group communication, and clearer understanding of institutional mission are two of the resulting assets.

4. INCLUDE MATERIAL ON NEGLECTED TOPICS. Institutions, districts, and systems are urged to provide information, i.e., policies and regulations, on two neglected topics: institutional research, and articulation and transfer. Both areas were almost totally absent in the documents examined. Examples of appropriate information were provided in the fourth section.

5. MAINTAIN AN INFORMAL STYLE AND PRESENT STRAIGHTFORWARD EXPLANATIONS. A number of suggestions were offered to improve clarity, precision, usability, readability, and appearance of handbooks and manuals.

FINAL WORD

Handbooks and manuals produced by two-year colleges are highly individualized documents. Orginially, they were primarily informational and served as communication links between the various constituencies of the institution. Some writers/ editors are now adding sections on improving instruction and effective ways to serve students. Greater priority in preparation should, in the future, be given to these components, and to material that complements and supplements other publications.

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